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SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/S AND INR
STATE PASS TO USAID

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [WA](#)
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT CREATES STANDALONE OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

Classified By: Ambassador Mathieu, for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

Summary

1. (U) On September 8 President Hifikepunye Pohamba acted to split the Office of the Attorney General from the Justice Ministry, appointing Dr Albert Kawana as interim Attorney General. The move to decouple the offices has been met with support from legal professionals and opposition parties. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) On September 8 President Hifikepunye Pohamba acted to split the Office of the Attorney General from the Justice Ministry, appointing SWAPO loyalist Dr Albert Kawana as interim Attorney General. The Minister of Justice and SWAPO General Secretary Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana, who previously performed the duties of the Attorney General, will remain the Minister of Justice.

3. (U) The appointment of Dr. Albert Kawana comes after SWAPO members loyal to former president Sam Nujoma, last month, apparently rejected President Pohamba's first choice for the Attorney General post, lawyer Hosea Angula. SWAPO cadres close to Nujoma did not support Angula as some questioned his loyalty to the ruling party.

4. (U) Legal professionals and opposition political parties, who have had a troubled relationship with the Minister of Justice, have called the decision to decouple the Office of the Attorney General from the Minister of Justice's portfolio a positive step.

Comment

5. (C) Some SWAPO insiders consider the decision to split the positions of Attorney General and Minister of Justice, held by the SWAPO Secretary General, as an essential demonstration of President Pohamba's conviction and power to exercise his presidential authorities in spite of SWAPO party hardliners. The appointment of an established party operative, however, may have made the decision more palatable to those opposed. It remains to be seen whether Kawana's temporary appointment will be confirmed, or whether an outsider will ultimately be appointed. Increasing calls to promote government officials based on their ruling party credentials comes as a result of heightened suspicions within SWAPO, especially among hardliners linked to former President Sam Nujoma, concerning who in the SWAPO leadership is affiliated with the new opposition party, the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP). The formation of the RDP, founded by disgruntled former SWAPO heavyweights, has exposed cleavages in SWAPO pitting party hardliners affiliated with Nujoma against more moderate elements in the party.

MATHIEU